

Notes on ways that I wish that I had written this book differently (or what I wish I had known then that I know much more about now):

I wish that I had known more about college radio, which was the way that the first Pacifica generation experienced public radio in the 1930s and 1940s.

I wish that I had not relied on early Pacifica PR materials as much as I did. Some of the claims in those documents turned out to be wrong.

I wish I had possessed a more confident understanding of the history of the regulation of broadcasting in the USA in the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s.

I wish that I had spent a bit more time on the early history of WBAI.

Most importantly (see next page) . . .

PACIFICA RADIO:
THE RISE OF AN
ALTERNATIVE
NETWORK



I wish that I had spent less time on KPFA's internal battles, and more time linking the book's larger argument to the rest of American society. The main thesis of the book was that Pacifica began as a communal experiment and wound up contouring its mission ideas to fit into Cold War liberalism's claim that the purpose of freedom is to give citizens more choices. I wish I had spent more time explaining what that really meant in 1950s and early 1960s America, especially in the context of broadcasting.

Bottom line: I wish I had written this book AFTER ten years of writing for Radio Survivor. Oh well. - Matthew Lasar

WILDFLOWERS & RADIO TOWERS
WORDS and photos
by Jennifer Wertz

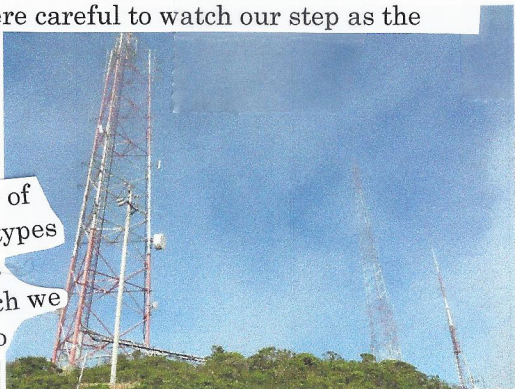
Although I love a good brunch, this year the Mother's Day of my dreams was spent hiking on San Bruno Mountain. I gaze at the mountain every day from my window in the southern part of San Francisco and had long wanted to explore its trails. The trip far exceeded my expectations, largely because the 1,314 foot tall mountain's summit is dotted with radio and television towers.



As I trekked with my husband and daughter on a foggy May afternoon, we were treated to a seemingly never-ending display of wildflowers while we meandered on a loop trail to the top of San Bruno Mountain.

Along the way we caught glimpses of the various radio towers from a variety of angles. I felt like radio tower documenter Amanda Dawn Christie as I kept snapping photos of the fog-shrouded metal edifices. The human-made towers stood in contrast to the intriguing natural habitat on the mountain. We were careful to watch our step as the

trail was full of caterpillars, many of which will transform into several types of rare and endangered butterflies (including the Mission Blue), which we did not want to disturb. I was also



sense that Maron could plunge back into depression and be off the air again at any moment. I'm sure there are other examples out there, but Maron seemed to have blazed the trail for a style of celebrity interview in the podcast form that broke the mold for celebrity interviews. It was more intimate and profane and for a few months it was fascinating how Maron could still make every episode about himself no matter who was the guest. Maybe it was the raw emotional openness on his behalf as host that allowed the guests (who in the beginning were all his friends and colleagues) to open up.

Here's an email about WTF I sent to a friend in June of 2010:

Marc Maron's WTF is incredible. The first episode reveals a man in severe pain and transition (coming off a divorce), and then further programs reveal that he is getting his shit together because of the podcast. Amazing. Themes include the BUSINESS of comedy and performing on the road, as well as the brotherhood (sisterhood) of comics.

These two recent episodes really stand out:

http://wtfpod.libsyn.com/episode_75_carlos_mencia

http://wtfpod.libsyn.com/episode_76_willie_barcelona_steve_trevino_carlos_responds

Carlos Mencia has a hit show on Comedy Central. He also has been accused by his peers in comedy of SHAMELESSLY stealing material. Stealing jokes. Marc confronts Mencia and it is unbelievably compelling "radio."

Another comedy podcast - that gives it's host the chance to do straight up news/public affairs interviews is David Feldman's podcast. In this episode he interviews David Wild, who writes for Rolling Stone and Hollywood.

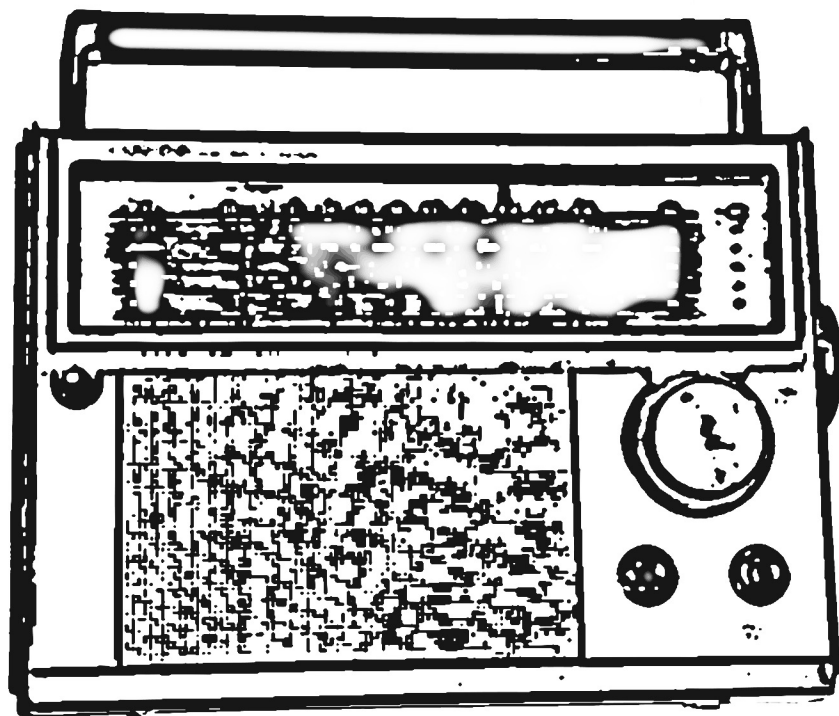
<http://davidfeldmancomedy.com/audio/2010/06/05/audio-tag-artist-raw-audio-tag-title-raw>

And then I love this show the best: <http://www.gosuperego.com/>

In October of 2009 I sent Maron. an email in lieu of donating to his pre-Patreon/pre-Kickstarter online fund raising efforts, suggesting he try to get paid advertising from Adam and Eve, the Seattle based online sex shop, since they seemed to be spending money on that sort of thing with Dan Savage and his new sex advice podcast. I also seemed to have been sending him ideas for jokes, which I now find extremely shameful and embarrassing, partly because the ideas are pretty terrible.

I recommended two other comedy podcasts to my friend in the above email: **David Feldman** had a comedy podcast. I think it often aired on KPFF. Memorable highlights included his live, on stage performance of satirical sit-com scripts with multiple cast members. It was great radio. **Super Ego** was a comedy sketch podcast that predates the Ear Wolf brand that it would eventually join. It stands out to this day as a highly produced and edited comedy show built upon improvisation and friends making each other laugh.

That's enough digging into my past listening habits for now. Thanks for reading.



Radio Shack Realistic DX-66

A Christmas gift from my Estonian grandfather when I was in middle school in the early 80s, this was my first shortwave receiver, and the first radio I have distinct memories of. Very basic, with a big easy-to-read color coded dial, it was easy to use. There was so much less RF interference back then, that it was no problem for a kid to quickly tune in strong shortwave stations like the BBC or Deutsche Welle. Using the DX-66 I first heard a mysterious sequence of numbers read aloud in a female voice, prompting my dad to explain what a numbers station was.

**How many stations can
Jennifer see in one day?
Her record is five...**

**April 25, 2013: 4 (Portland, OR)
April 8, 2014: 5 (Philly and Main Line)
Aug. 6, 2014: 4 (Boston, MA via public transit!)
Oct. 22, 2014: 4 (Seattle area)
October 24, 2018: 5 (Seattle area)**

**Most complicated tour day?
Perhaps my trip to Arkansas
in October, 2016:**

**6:20am PT flight SFO-Dallas,
Dallas-Little Rock.
2 hour DELAY (grrr).
Rented car, drove nearly 3 hours
to Fayetteville to visit 2 radio
stations after dark, with last
tour starting at 9:30pm CT**

-Jennifer

Hi, Eric Klein here. These are:

Some of the Podcasts I listened to 10 years ago, in 2009.

(It's hard to remember its not easy to forget.)

I was time shifting radio before it was cool. Lots of great shows had websites for time shifted listening before Apple made mp3 downloading to your pocket mainstream. Upon graduating from college in the year 2000 I would habitually stream the back catalogue of programs I learned about by listening to the radio including **This American Life** and **Joe Frank**. Shout out to "Real Audio"!

The dramatic and ongoing twists and turns of the 2008 Democratic Primaries following the 8 upsetting years of the Bush Era made me a true-blue subscriber to the **Slate Political Gabfest**. Not only did they read news papers and watch cable T.V. but they would also do their own original reporting. This is still [REDACTED] unique in podcast political talk land. Original reporting. It's the only real value in talk, and it's far too rare.

I remember the first time a podcast was recommended to me by a friend. It was **The Sound of Young America**. What made the work of Jessie Thorn interesting a decade ago was that he brought a youthful energy to the culture of public radio at a time when the voices of young radio professionals was rare. I have a pet theory that the bad economies of the early 2000's followed by the crash of 2008 changed the sound of radio for our generation. Were stations hiring young people at the same rate they did in previous generations? Were Baby Boomer radio producers sitting on all the good jobs in front of microphones while Gen X and Millennials were left off the air and forced to take to the internet? It's a compelling story and I'm sure there are more than a few facts to be found lying around to support it. "The Sound of Young America" was nothing more than a traditionally structured half hour public radio interview program on pop culture with guests that ranged from authors of popular literature to Hip Hop artists. The fact that it was rare to hear a person in their 20's making radio like this made this program unique in its day. Now Jessie Thorne is an old bearded Millennial and his show is on NPR.

Comedy Death Ray. I was there dang it, listening to the show on Day One! I heard Scott Aukerman's first episode before the second one was released. I liked it. It was live. He had his funny friends on as guests. They would play themselves and they would play characters and they would fill the hour with laughs. Sometimes a stand-up would do 5 minutes of material. The podcasts included full tracks of comedy songs (the copyrighted kind) and there were no ads because Midroll (let alone Ear Wolf) didn't exist yet.

Same goes for **WTF with Marc Maron**. I think I was reading Jessie Thorn's tumblr when I learned that Marc was mounting a come back after loosing his job in radio and getting a divorce. First I watched an authorized bootleg of Maron. doing 20 minutes of very angsty middle-aged stand up. Then a week later I listened to the first episode of WTF when it was fresh to the world. I stayed loyal for over a year to the podcast. It was interesting to hear Maron rebuild his sense of self-worth by talking to his famous friends and finding his place in the world again. The beginning of WTF was a compelling story of redemption and I had the

entranced by the colorful and unusual wildflowers, some of which aren't seen in many other places.

While we opted for a nearly 4-mile round trip hike, there are a number of different options for those wanting a more or less strenuous expedition. If you just want to see the towers up close without hiking, it's possible to just drive to the aptly-named Radio Road.

Although I love the fog, I'm looking forward to a return trip on a clear day, so that I can see the panoramic views of San Francisco and beyond.

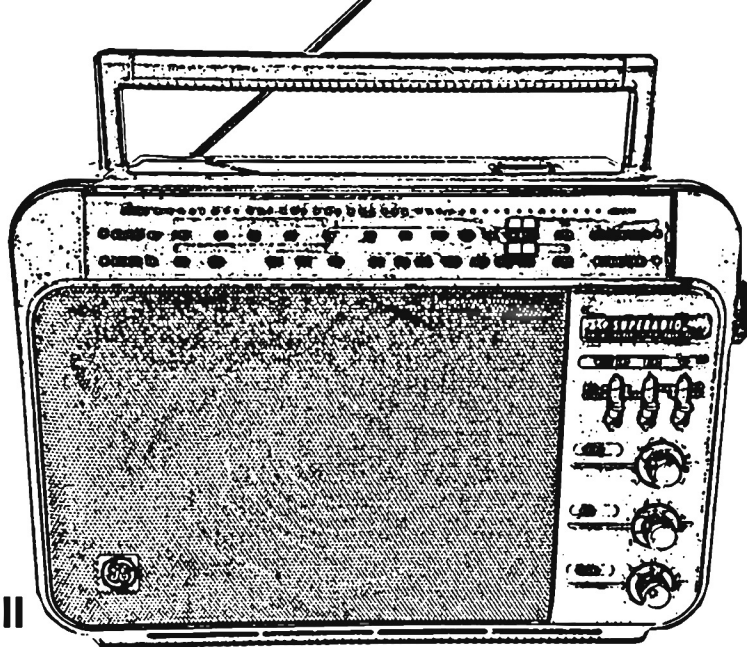


If you go: San Bruno Mountain State and County Park borders Daly City, Colma, South San Francisco, and Brisbane and is a short drive from the southern part of San Francisco. \$6 parking fee, no dogs & no loud radios.

More: <https://parks.smcgov.org/san-bruno-mountain-state-county-park>



GE Super Radio III



Though I'd always had a habit of scanning the dial looking for strange and distant signals, in the late 90s I became more interested in purposefully DXing. Reading radio and DXing Usenet groups, I read over and over again that one of the best, reasonably priced receivers at the time was the GE Super Radio III. Possessing a larger-than-average ferrite core antenna inside, it was a veritable magnet for weak AM signals. After prevaricating for a year or more – I was a poor graduate student, and even a \$50 outlay was considerable – one day I finally drove out to the local Best Buy to purchase the only one on their shelf.

With the Super Radio's ability to adjust selectivity, at night I became utterly accustomed to hearing stations from all over the Midwest, from my home base of Champaign, IL, with little effort, east to Pittsburgh and west to Iowa and Nebraska. I even regularly heard from the likes of Ontario and Quebec, Des Moines' WHO-AM and New Orleans' WWL, along with occasional appearances of New York's WCBS-AM and Denver's KOA-AM.

Much to my disappointment my Super Radio was not long lived, maybe fewer than five years. It was the victim of an unobserved accident that caused the power/volume knob to quit functioning. Opening it up revealed that the circuit board was cracked. Perhaps repairable by someone more skilled than I, it was cast off to a local electronics hoarder who expressed interest in attempting a fix.

FSRN had a staff reporter position on Capitol Hill in Washing D.C. This reporter would interview elected members of the House and Senate and ask them questions and get the answers recorded on-mic and then those stories would air on stations around the country.

A paid reporter would ask a U.S. Senator questions about the Iraq War for a radio network founded by Pacifists and funded by the antiwar left.

All of this was accomplished with money, but it was a relatively small amount of money considering how other enterprises are funded. With a humble budget a group of radio news producers from around the world created a highly scripted, sound rich, fact based, grass roots, news program.

The flaws included burn out, low wages for workers in high priced cities, and gaps in the freelance coverage area (FSRN did not do a good job of reporting stories in the vast parts of the U.S. that didn't already happen to have an FSRN reporter living there) . But FSRN did have a paid position on Capital Hill. We had reporters in Iraq at the start of the 2003 war. We had a reporter in Lagos Nigeria where people were resisting the the oil industry. There were reporters in Mexico, India, Africa, and Indonesia, and so and and elsewhere.

FSRN used the internet when the internet was young to make an international news program on the cheap. We used personal computers and consumer software. The tech team worked at KPFA. Our computers were in an open part of the office building, under a sky light and adjacent to the copy machine between two offices. They had doors and we didn't.

I miss FSRN because it was a source of real reporting and it connected community radio stations and people all around the world. We should build something like it again soon.

Jennifer's favorite radio houses!



WNCN -North Central College, Naperville, IL



KDUP, University of Portland, Portland, OR



KBCS, Bellevue College, Bellevue, WA

Radios I Have Known by Paul Riismandel

To a radio lover, nearly every receiver tells a story. I don't develop strong relationships with every radio. But, like past friends and lovers, some stand out in your mind. Here are seven (out of several dozen) whose stories I want to share.

The radio stayed with me over the course of many moves, to and from college, then to graduate school in Central Illinois. I even tuned in my first shortwave pirate on it. Round about 1997 the infamous – and infamously high-powered – Radio Metallica Worldwide came blasting through over the course of several weekends. Otherwise, I'd never had luck finding a pirate, given the receiver's low sensitivity and selectivity, relative to modern ones.

By the early 2000s I finally owned a more contemporary digitally-tuned shortwave receiver, so the DX-66 was mostly living in a closet, so I gifted it to a friend who moved into a new apartment but who had no radio.

Today I'm more nostalgic for that old Radio Shack radio than most electronics I've ever owned. I kind of wish I had not given it away, although I know it went on to be well used, as all good radios should.

Inspired by the 'zine "8-Track Mind" published by analog advocate Russ Forster, I got into collecting and listening to the oft-maligned titular format in the early 2000s. One late night, on impulse, I bid some absurdly low sum on a Sylvania 8-track stereo receiver. In the morning I woke to the surprise that I won the auction and the beast would soon be on its way.

Turns out the unit was in very good condition and I quickly connected it up, plugging in a recently garage-saled Supertramp tape. The warm sounds of the "Logical Song" poured into the room. Nowhere near the fidelity of my modern hi-fi equipment, it was melodious and pleasing nonetheless.

Set up in my home office, eventually I started using its radio tuner. One cold winter evening I decided to stray from our local NPR affiliate on the AM dial, and in no time heard a familiar French-Canadian accent, beaming in from Quebec. I did not expect that Sylvie to be such a DXer.

Back when the receiver was designed in the 70s, Sylvania was owned by GTE and made in the US. The company had a storied history in radio manufacture that still garnered respect until the brand was sold off in the early 80s. Moreover, in the 70s competition between receiver manufacturers was fierce. Sylvania no more wanted to be outdone by Marantz than Pioneer or Sansui. That quality is evident with the 3730, even if 21st century eyes automatically assume the 8-track deck is the mark of an inferior product.

In the end, the receiver was another victim of our Portland move. My good friend Jerry very graciously took it off my hands to complement his mid-century themed basement bar.



SYLVANIA STEREO 8 TRACK TAPE PLAYER / RECEIVER CRT 3730

This is one of the few stand-alone HD Radio tuners for the home ever made. Many A/V receivers have HD Radio capability, but probably few owners notice or use it. Most people who hear HD listen in the car, where a larger percentage of radio listening happens these days.

This little tuner is a bit of an online legend, known for having exceptionally good sound quality and a sensitive tuner, complementing its HD reception. I bought it on clearance at a Chicago-area electronics store around 2010 for about a quarter of the \$300+ prices it fetches now on eBay. I didn't (and still don't) have a car, so this seemed like the best way to experiment with HD Radio.

Though I still think the service is mostly a boondoggle, I do enjoy tuning in some of the more interesting HD2 stations on my local dial, from Oregon Public Broadcasting's indie rock OPB Music to Waterfront Blues Radio on KGON-HD2. The secondary and tertiary HD stations often change up with little notice, so it seems like there's something new every other bandscan.

I'm still unconvinced of the value of having an HD Radio in the home, and so I doubt I'd pay the exorbitant prices the F1HD now commands. I'll just feel lucky that I got mine for a bargain.

Sony XDR-F1HD HD Radio Tuner



Hi, my name is Eric Klein and when I was 26 years old I started to work in community radio volunteering and picking up paid shifts with

Free Speech Radio News on the tech team. I've done other things I'm proud of since then, but looking back I realize now that FSRN was special. The show grew out of a crisis at Pacifica Radio, then received the lion share of its funding from Pacifica and then went off the air when Pacifica would no longer pay for it. This is not that story. This is about why FSRN was **great radio**.

5 days a week, FSRN produced a 29 minute long news program which included 4 or 5 feature stories. These features were **fully reported radio journalism from around the world**. Africa, Asia, South America, the Middle East. A reporter who was usually from the community they were reporting on (or at least living there for the long-term) would report radio stories for our audience. Reporting the story meant **interviewing people** and writing and voicing a script. Those interviews were where FSRN stood out and it's their loss that I regret the most.

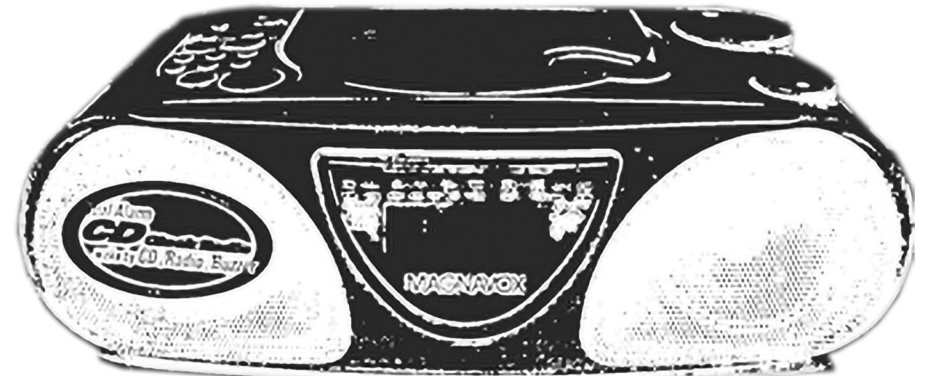
Listen to an episode of FSRN from that era and compare it to the work of CNN or the BBC. FSRN always included the voices of the **people**, literally. People of all kinds, including but not limited to poor people. These voices were a large part of every episode of FSRN. I would listen to other reporters who were out in the world reporting for NPR or the BBC or CNN and it was always shocking how rarely those highly resourced outfits would do this one simple thing of including interviews with regular people. Doubly so when those people lived in other countries.

Clock radios are important to me because you should always have a radio in the bedroom. It's a proven fact. Most of us need an alarm to wake up, and radios give you the morning news, or soothing music at night. So why not combine them and save the space?

In the mid-90s I wanted to add some CD tunes to my bedtime listening, and my parents were kind enough to present me with a Magnavox CD clock radio for my birthday. I was surprised at how nice it sounded – much richer than most CD boomboxes even twice its size. Its radio performance was impressive too. Sporting a relatively tiny analog tuning dial and a 18" wire FM antenna, the little Maggie couldn't outclass the Super Radio, but it had no problem sucking in Chicago AM stations at night and even relatively fringe FM stations in the day.

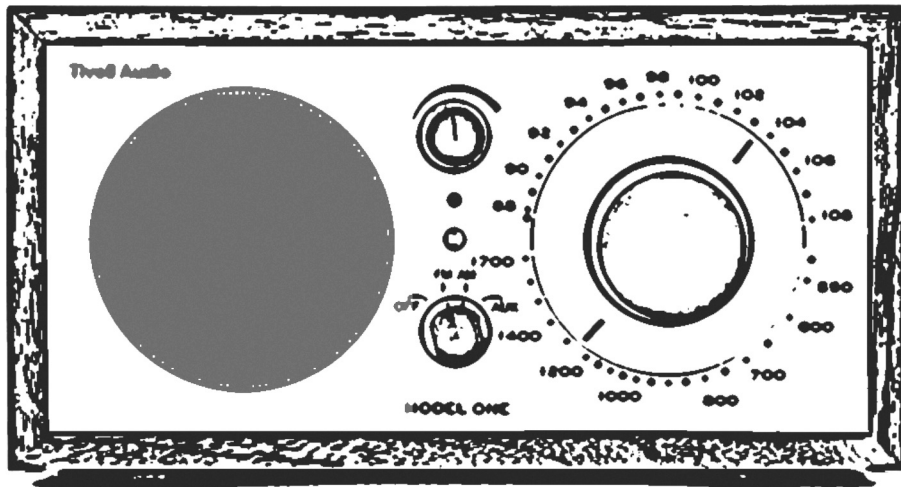
Come the shift from spring to summer in June, that clock radio was a particular monster at brining in e-skip. That's when FM stations hundreds of miles away bounce off the ionosphere and come in as clear as local ones, sometimes overwhelming nearby stations. The effect can be heard on any radio, but I'd swear I heard more while using that radio than any other I've owned.

The Magnavox stayed in service as my primary bedroom radio for seventeen years, until I moved from Chicago to Portland, Oregon, needing to significantly pare down the belongings I'd haul across the country.



Magnavox AJ-3920 CD Clock Radio

Tivoli Model One

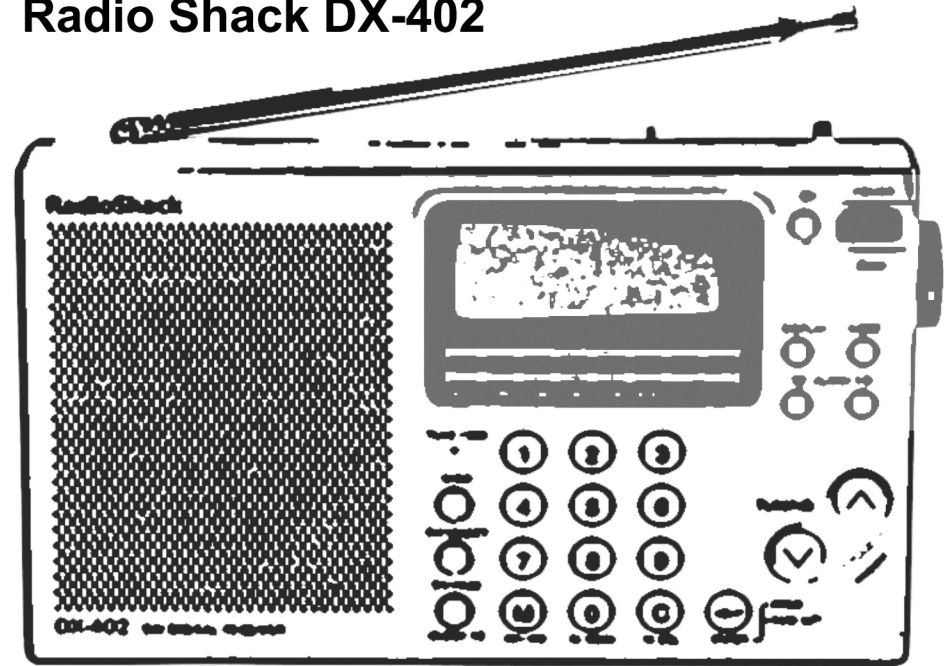


The quotidian table radio was something of a forgotten commodity when the Tivoli Model One hit the market in 2000. It was designed by audio industry veteran Henry Kloss, who in the 60s manufactured KLH branded compact stereos and designed one of the first projection televisions, and then created what is widely considered the first high fidelity cassette deck in the early 70s.

Simple and straightforward, the Model One features an analog AM/FM tuner in a handsome wood cabinet, with a single 4" speaker and a big, accurate tuning dial. What set it apart was the quality of the tuner and the sound. While not necessarily a DXer's delight like a GE SuperRadio, the Tivoli brings in local stations clearly, with good selectivity and very balanced pleasing sound. Plus, it's compact and looks more like a piece of modern furniture than a box of electronics.

I got mine in 2002, and it's been the household's go-to everyday radio ever since.

Radio Shack DX-402



My first digitally-tuned shortwave radio, I was particularly excited by the DX-402 because it offered sideband tuning (SSB). When I bought this radio in 2001, this was a relatively new feature on portable radios under \$200. Previously it was mostly found on large desktop receivers costing multiples of that.

SSB is a desirable feature because it lets you better tune in shortwave pirates, who use this mode in order to broadcast farther with less power.

Though I don't scan around looking for pirates as much as I used to, the DX-402 is still my main shortwave listening rig. It's pretty beat up now, with its main tuning knob broken off. Even so, it remains utterly adequate.